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The *Golfer's* **Rubáiyát**

The Golfer's Rubaíyat

by
J.G.W. Boynton



**Herbert S. Stone
& Compani**

Chicago

1901



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The Golfer's Rubáiyát

I

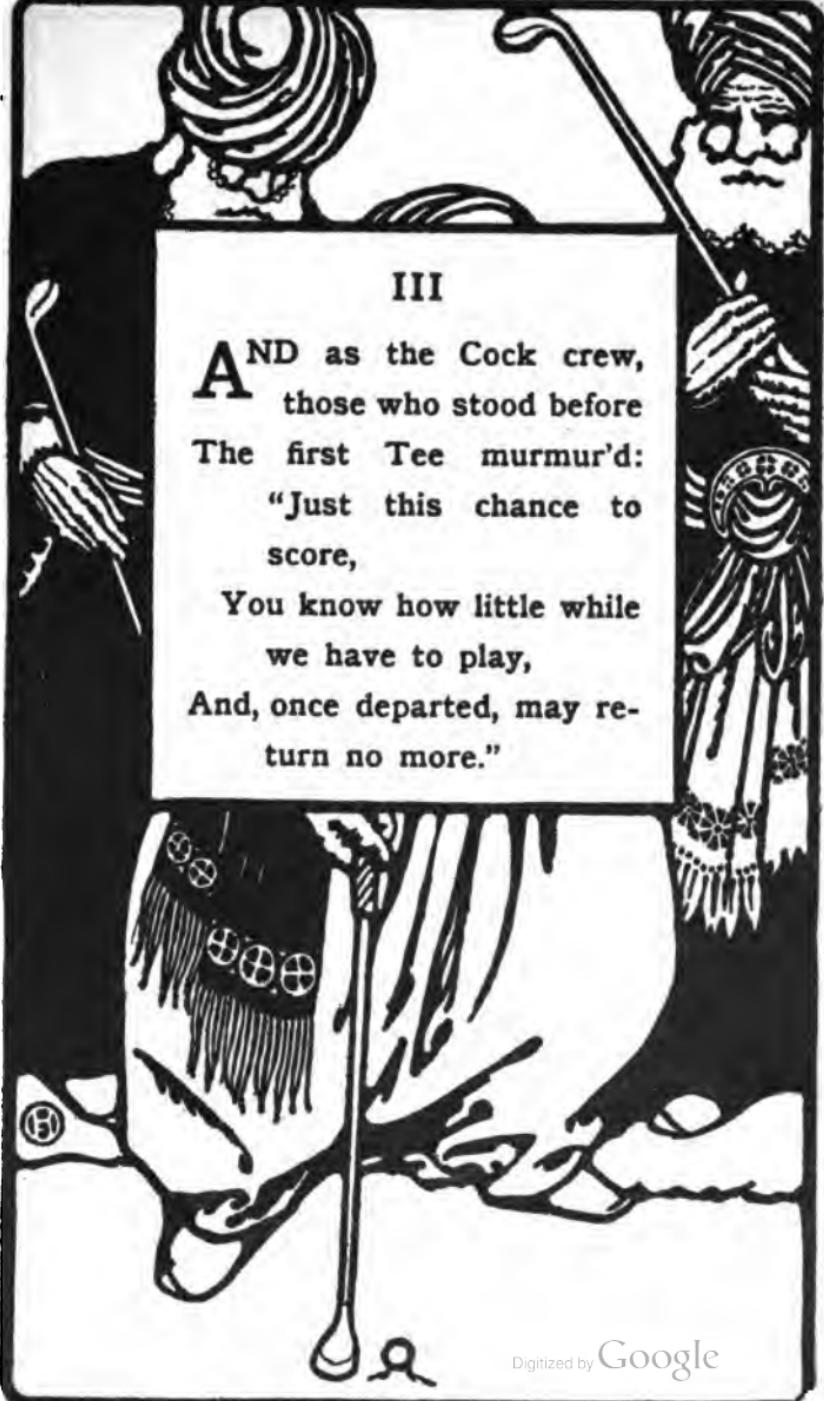
WAKE! for the sun has
driven in equal flight
The stars before him from
the Tee of Night,
And holed them every one
without a Miss,
Swinging at ease his gold-
shod Shaft of Light.



II

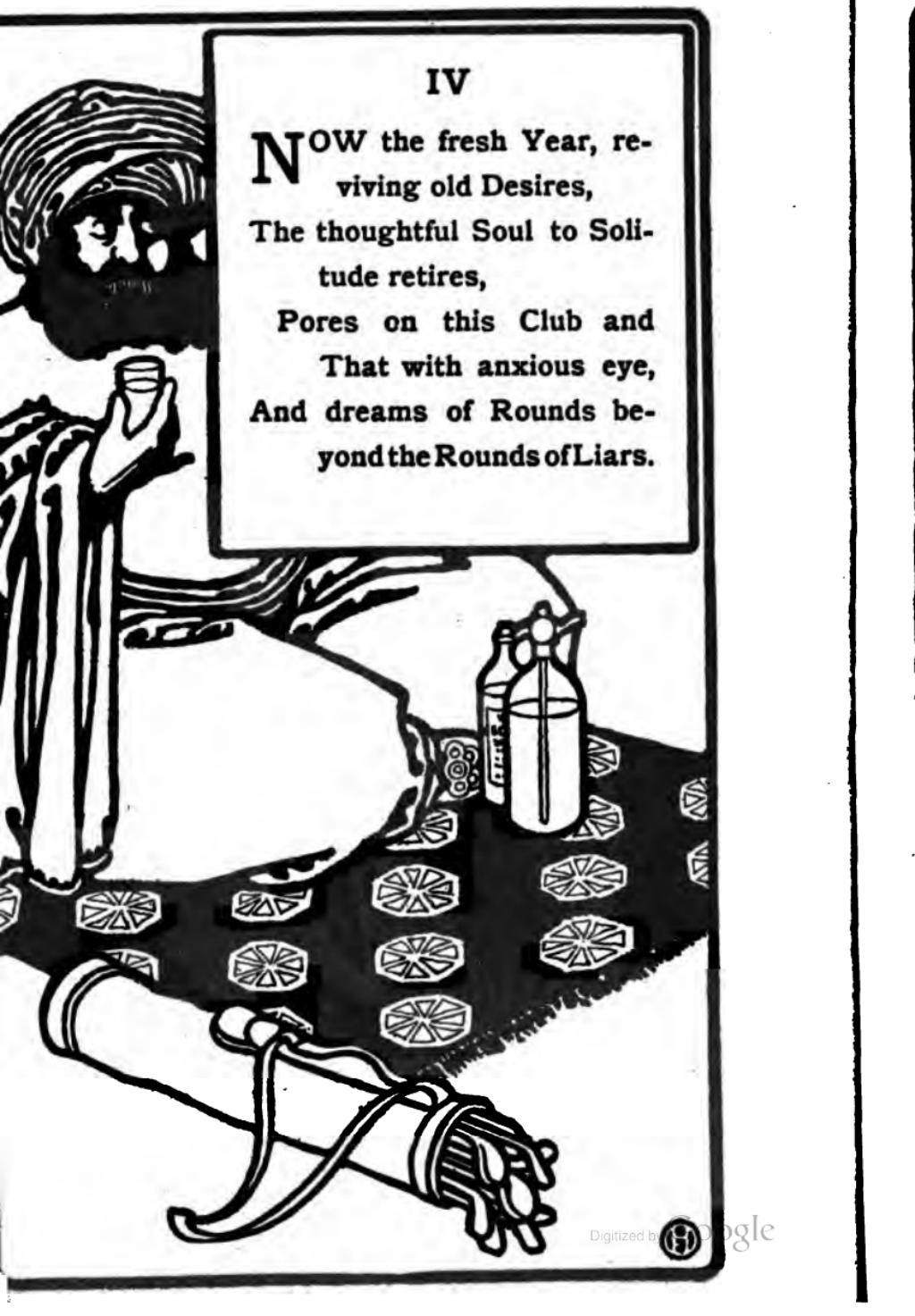
WAKE, Loiterer! for already Dawn is seen
With her red marker on the eastern Green,
And summons all her Little Ones to change
A joyous Three for every sad Thirteen.





III

AND as the Cock crew,
those who stood before
The first Tee murmur'd:
 "Just this chance to
score,
You know how little while
we have to play,
And, once departed, may re-
turn no more."

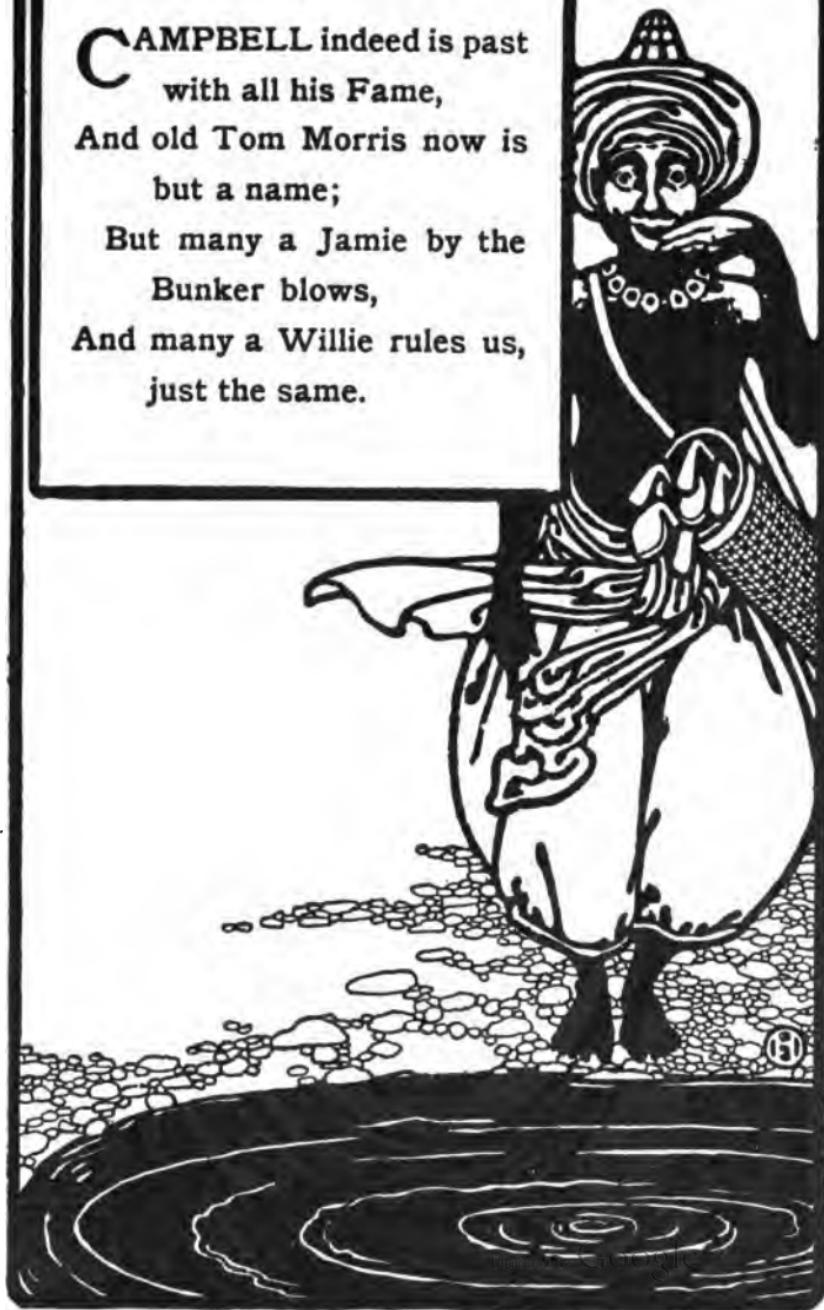


IV

NOW the fresh Year, re-viving old Desires,
The thoughtful Soul to Solitude retires,
Pores on this Club and That with anxious eye,
And dreams of Rounds beyond the Rounds of Liars.

V

CAMPBELL indeed is past
with all his Fame,
And old Tom Morris now is
but a name;
But many a Jamie by the
Bunker blows,
And many a Willie rules us,
just the same.



A THOUSAND lips are
lockt; but still in hoar
High-balling Andrew's
Shrine, with "Fore, fore,
fore!"

Oh, fore!" the Golfer to the
Duffer cries,
That reddened cheek of his
to redden more.



VII

COME, choose your Ball,
and in the fire of Spring
Your Red Coat, and your
wooden Putter fling;
The Club of Time has but
a little while
To waggle, and the Club is
on the swing.

(H)





VIII

WHETHER at Mussel-
burgh or Shinnecock,
In motley Hose or humbler
motley Sock,
The Cup of Life is ebbing
Drop by Drop,
Whether the Cup be filled
with Scotch or Bock.

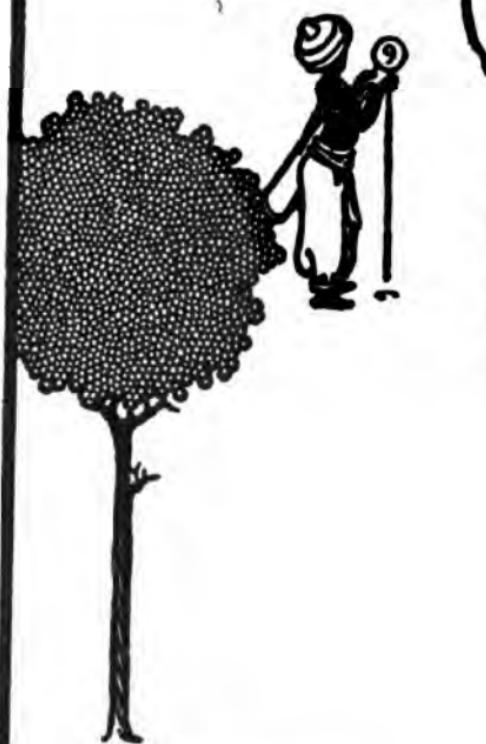


IX

EACH Morn a thousand
Matches brings, you
say;

Yes, but who plays the Match
of Yesterday?

And this first Summer
month of opening Greens
Shall take this Championship
and That away.





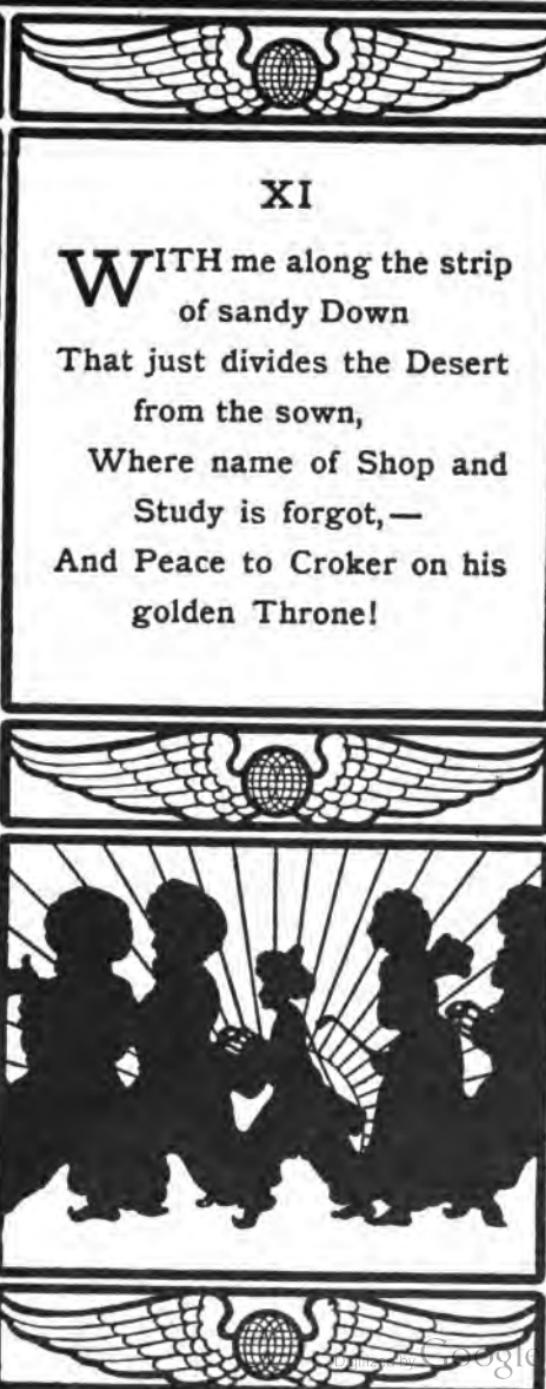
X

WELL, let it take them!
What have we to do
With Championships, or,
Champion, with you?
Let This or Other struggle
as he will,
For him alone the Strife—
for him to rue.



XI

WITH me along the strip
of sandy Down
That just divides the Desert
from the sown,
Where name of Shop and
Study is forgot,—
And Peace to Croker on his
golden Throne!



XII

A BAG of Clubs, a Silver-
Town or two,
A Flask of Scotch, a Pipe of
Shag—and Thou
Beside me caddying in the
Wilderness—
Ah, Wilderness were Para-
dise enow.



XIII

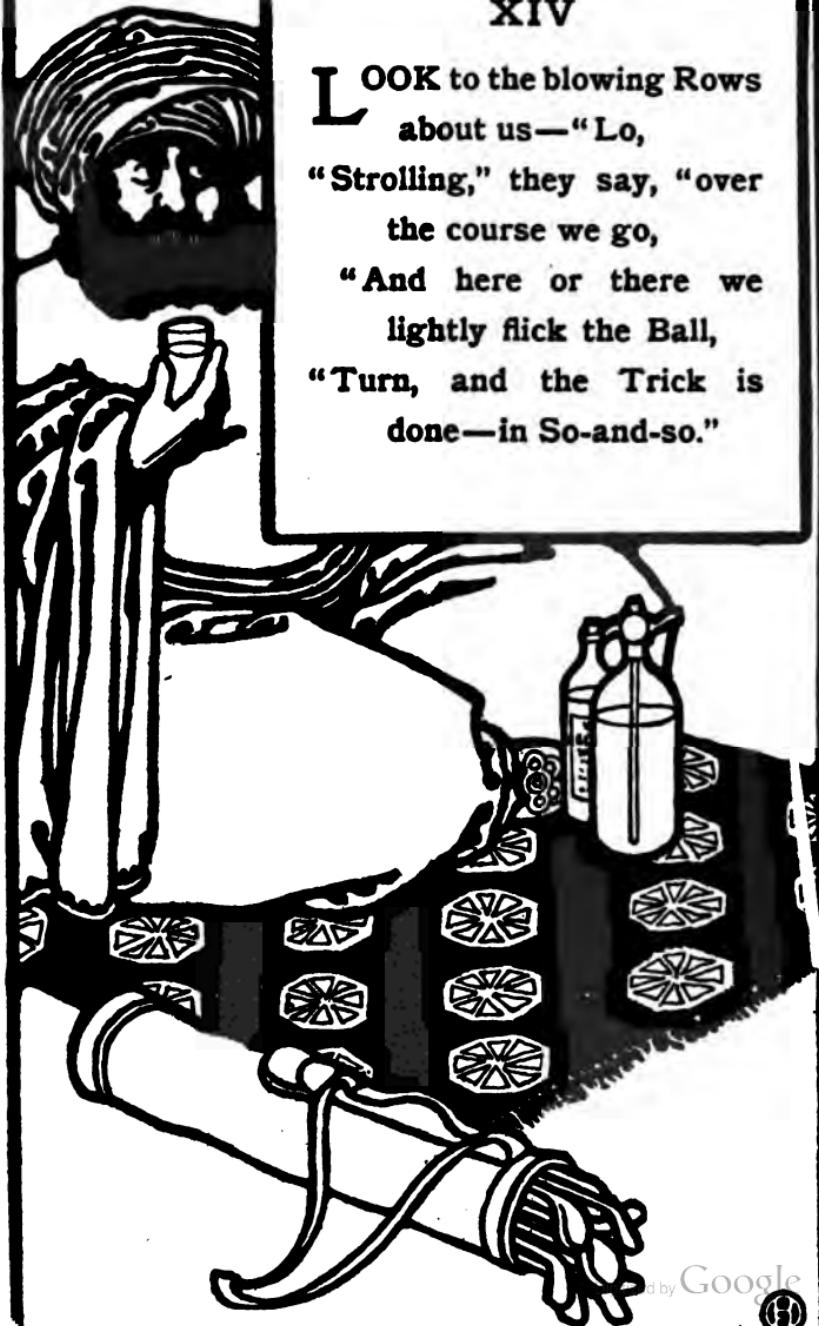
SOME for the weekly
Handicap; and some
Sigh for a greater Champion-
ship to come:

Ah, play the Match, and let
the Medal go,

Nor heed old Bogey with his
wretched Sum.

XIV

LOOK to the blowing Rows
about us—"Lo,
"Strolling," they say, "over
the course we go,
"And here or there we
lightly flick the Ball,
"Turn, and the Trick is
done—in So-and-so."



XV

BUT those who keep their
Cards and turn them in,
And those who weekly Handi-
caps may win,
Alike to no such aureate
Fame are brought,
As, buried once, Men want
dug up again.



XVI

THE shining Cup men set
their hearts upon
Is lost to them—or won
them; and anon,
Like a good Three set in
a bald Three-score,
That Glory gleams a mo-
ment—and is gone.



XVII

THINK, in this worn, for-
lorn old Field of Play,
Whose Green - keepers in
turn are Night and Day,
How Champion after Cham-
pion with his Pomp
Abode his destin'd Hour and
went his way.





XVIII

THEY say the Female and
the Duffer strut
On sacred Greens where Mor-
ris used to putt;
Himself a natural Hazard
now, alas!
That nice Hand quiet now,
that great Eye shut.



XIX

I SOMETIMES think that
never springs so green
The Turf as where some
Good Fellow has been,
And every emerald Stretch
the Fair Green shows
His kindly Tread has
known, his sure Play
seen.



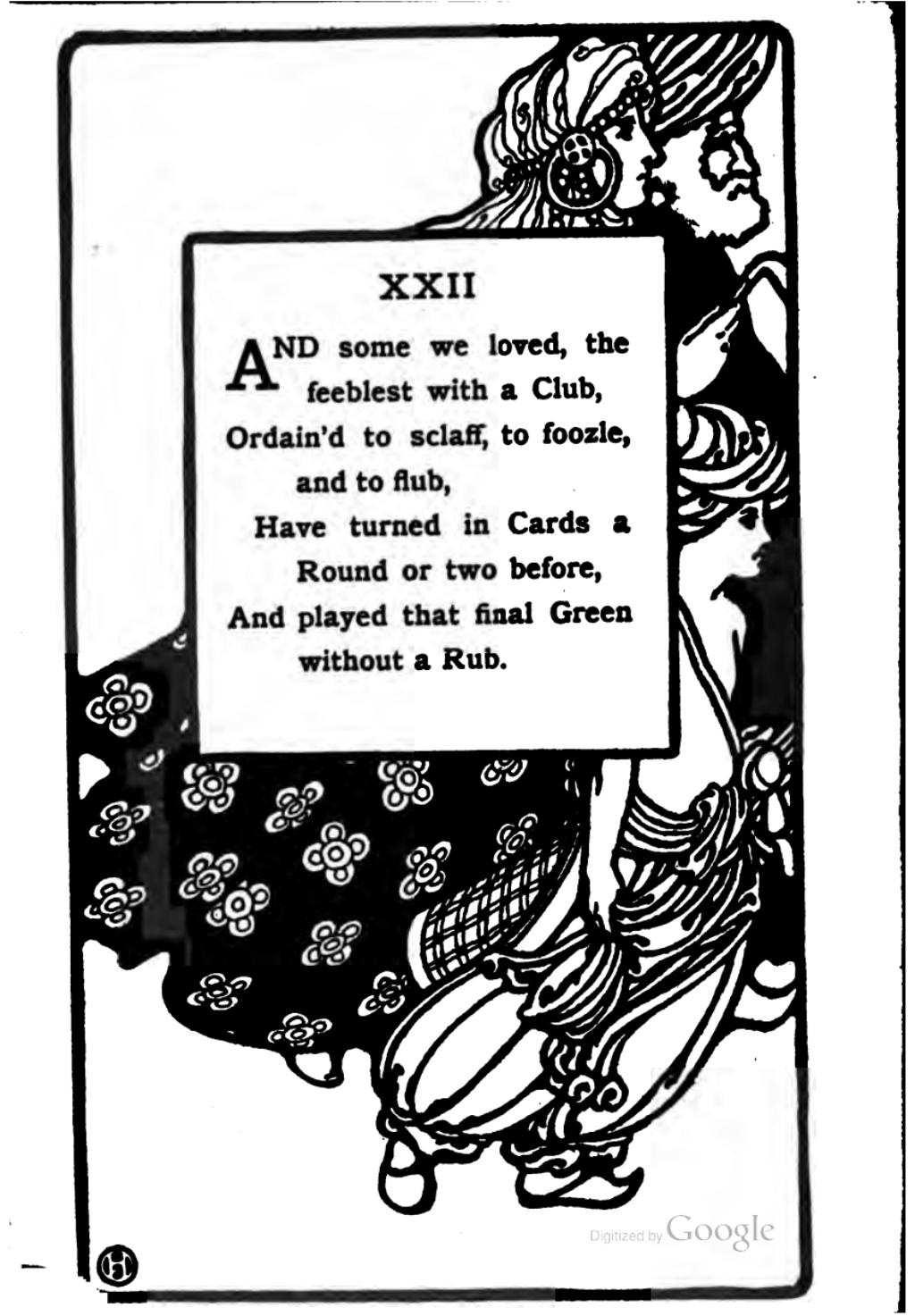
XX

AND this reviving Herb
whose tender green
Muffles the fair white Sphere
o'er which we lean,
Ah, curse it gently, for here
Jamie once—
Great Jamie—lay, and fetch'd
a bad Thirteen.



XXI

A H, my Belovéd, play the
Round that offers
TO-DAY some joy, whate'er
To-morrow suffers:
To-morrow!—why, to-mor-
row I may be
Myself with Yesterday's
Sev'n thousand Duffers.



XXII

AND some we loved, the
feeblest with a Club,
Ordain'd to sclaff, to foozle,
and to flub,
Have turned in Cards a
Round or two before,
And played that final Green
without a Rub.



XXIII

AND we that now make
merry on the Green
They left, and Summer
dresses in new sheen,
Ourselves must we beneath
the springing Turf
Add our Ell to the Bunker of
Has-been.



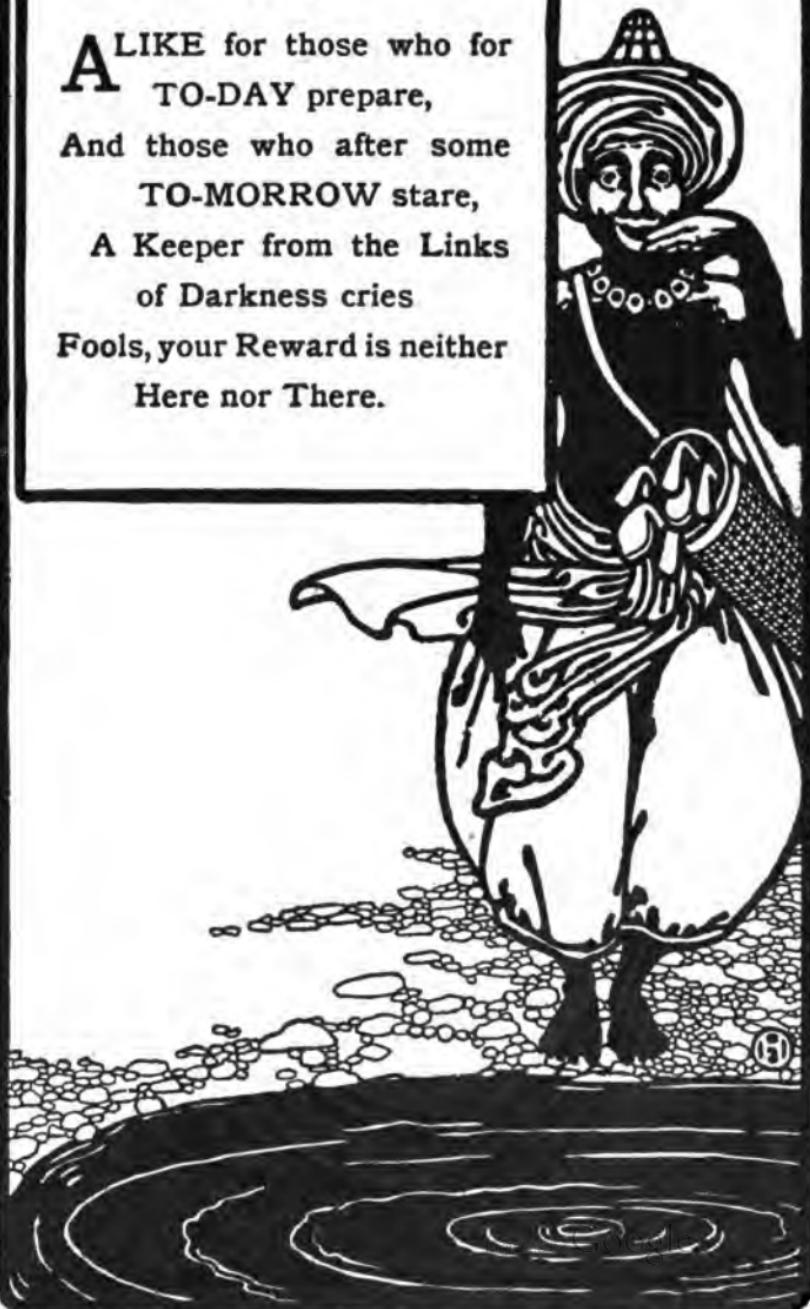
XXIV

A H, make the most of what
we yet may spend
Before we too into the Dust
descend;
Dust into dust, and under
Dust to lie,
Sans Breath, sans Golf, sans
Golfer, and—sans End!



XXV

A LIKE for those who for
TO-DAY prepare,
And those who after some
TO-MORROW stare,
A Keeper from the Links
of Darkness cries
Fools, your Reward is neither
Here nor There.



XXVI

WHY, all the Toms and
Jamies who discuss'd
Of the True Art so wisely—
they are thrust
Like foolish prophets forth;
their Words to Scorn
Are scatter'd, and their
Mouths are stopt with
Dust.



XXVII

MYSELF when young
did eagerly frequent
Jamie and His, and heard
great argument
Of Grip and Stance and
Swing; but evermore
Found at the Exit but a
Dollar spent.





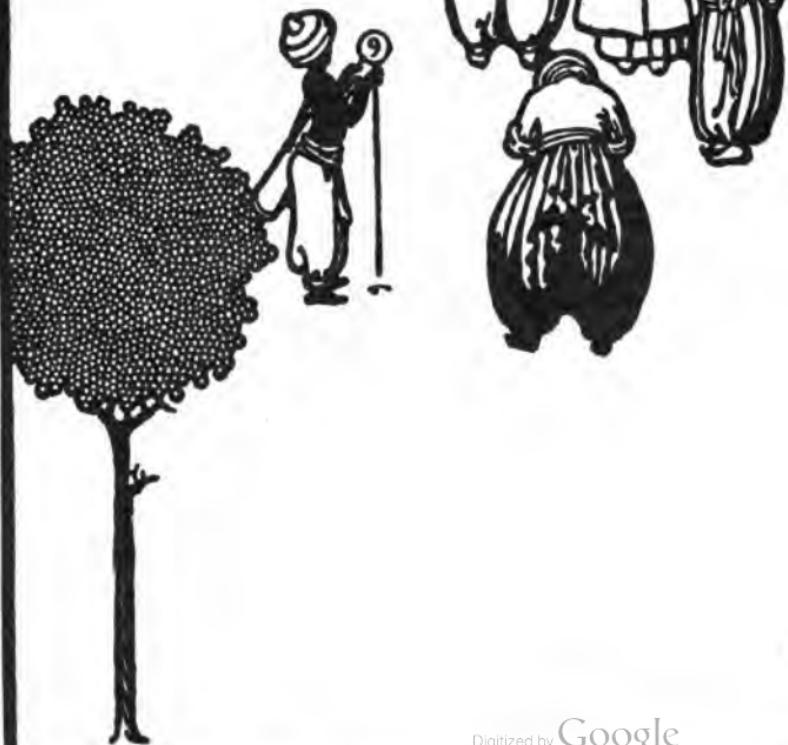
XXVIII

WITH them the seed
of Wisdom did I sow,
And with mine own hand
sought to make it grow;
And this was all the Har-
vest that I reap'd—
“ You hold it This Way, and
you swing it So.”



XXIX

PATIENT I fared to many
a sacred Spot,
Ev'n at the Shrine of Andrew
cast my lot,
And many a Knot unravel'd
by the Road;
But not, alas! of Golf the
Master-knot.



XXX

THERE was a Green for
which I found no Tee,
And a blind Bunker which I
might not see:

Out of the distant Dark a
Voice cries "Fore!"

And then—and then no more
of Thee and Me.



XXXI

AS then the Sparrow for
his morning Crumb,
Do thou each Morrow to the
First Tee come,
And play thy quiet Round,
till crusty Age
Condemn thee to a hopeless
Dufferdom.



XXXII

PERPLEXED no more with
Where or How or Why,
Thy easy fingers to the Shaft
apply,
Content to send away a fair
straight Ball,
Though follow'd earthward
by the naked Eye.

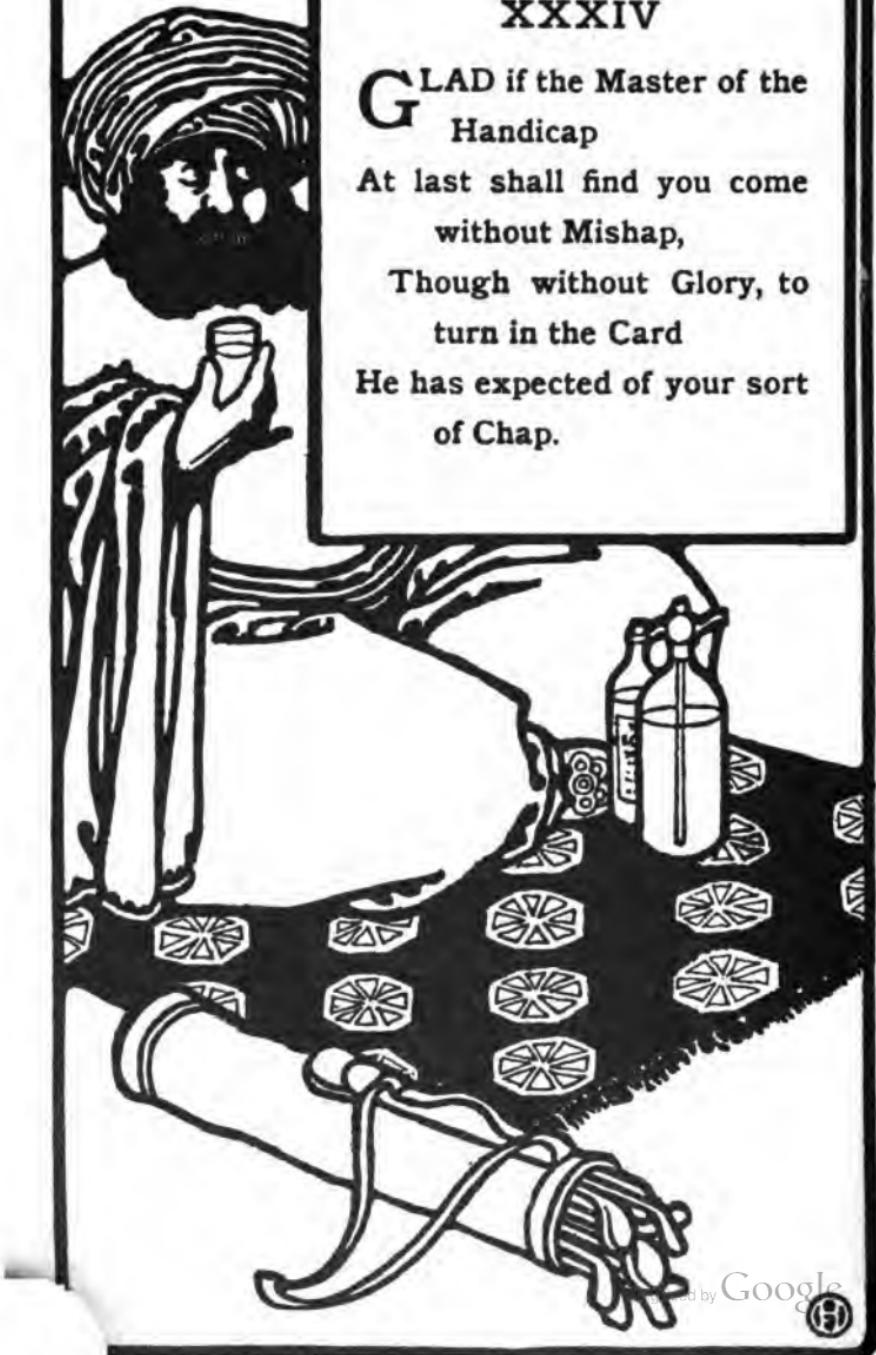
XXXIII

AND if the Ball you drive,
the Shaft you press,
End in what all begins and
ends in—Yes;
Thank Heav'n you play TO-
DAY as YESTERDAY
You play'd—TO-MORROW
you shall not do less.



XXXIV

GLAD if the Master of the
Handicap
At last shall find you come
without Mishap,
Though without Glory, to
turn in the Card
He has expected of your sort
of Chap.



XXXV

WHAT though a Fluke
should fling your
Class aside,
And Best Gross be your
momentary pride:
Are you a Golfer more than
when last week
You did YOUR best, and
barely saved your Hide?



XXXVI

'T IS like a private Bar
where for a Day
Innumerable Rickies come
your way,
Happy—but on the morrow
happier far
Had there been less to drink
and more to pay.



XXXVII

AND fear not lest the Fair
Green after your
Ill-luck and mine should yield
Bad Lies no more;
One or two Others may
fare ill as you:
Nay, even three, or maybe—
maybe four.



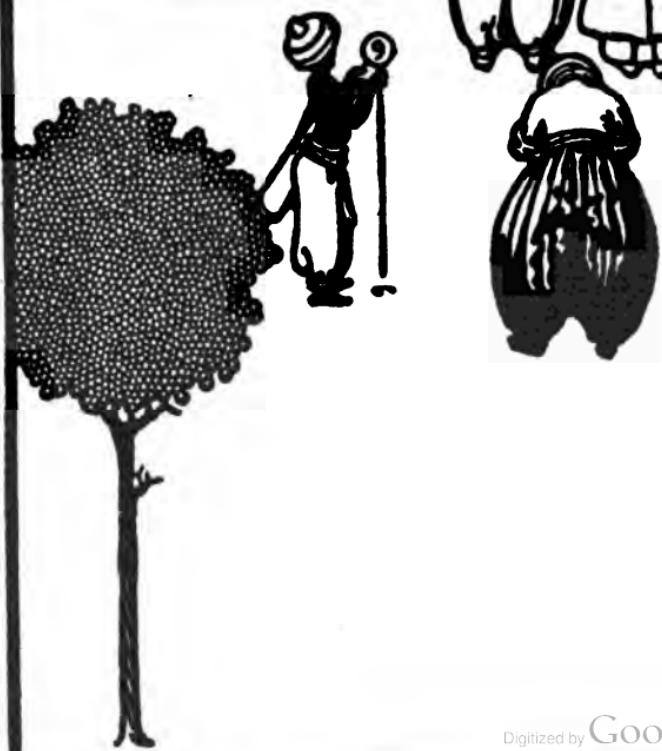
XXXVIII

WHEN you and I our
final Match have
play'd,
Think not the ever-spring-
ing Green shall fade;
Which of our Coming and
Departure heeds
As Caddies heed the Bag,—
their Quarter paid.



XXXIX

A MOMENT'S Flight—a
momentary Flick
Of Being from the Providen-
tial Stick,
And Lo!—the phantom hu-
man Sphere has reacht
The NOTHING it set out from—
Ah, be quick!



XL

WOULD you that Fillip
of Existence spend
About THE SECRET—
quick about it, Friend!
A Hair perhaps divides the
False and True,
And upon what, prithee, does
this Golf depend?



XLI

A HAIR perhaps divides
the False and True,
Yes, and a single Jamie were
the Clue—
Could you but find him—
to the Championship,
And peradventure to the
Champion too.





XLII

AND yet what matter who
a Moment reigns?
'Tis not for such a Toy you
take your pains;
To play the steady, simple,
honest Game;
That is the Joy and Credit
that remains.

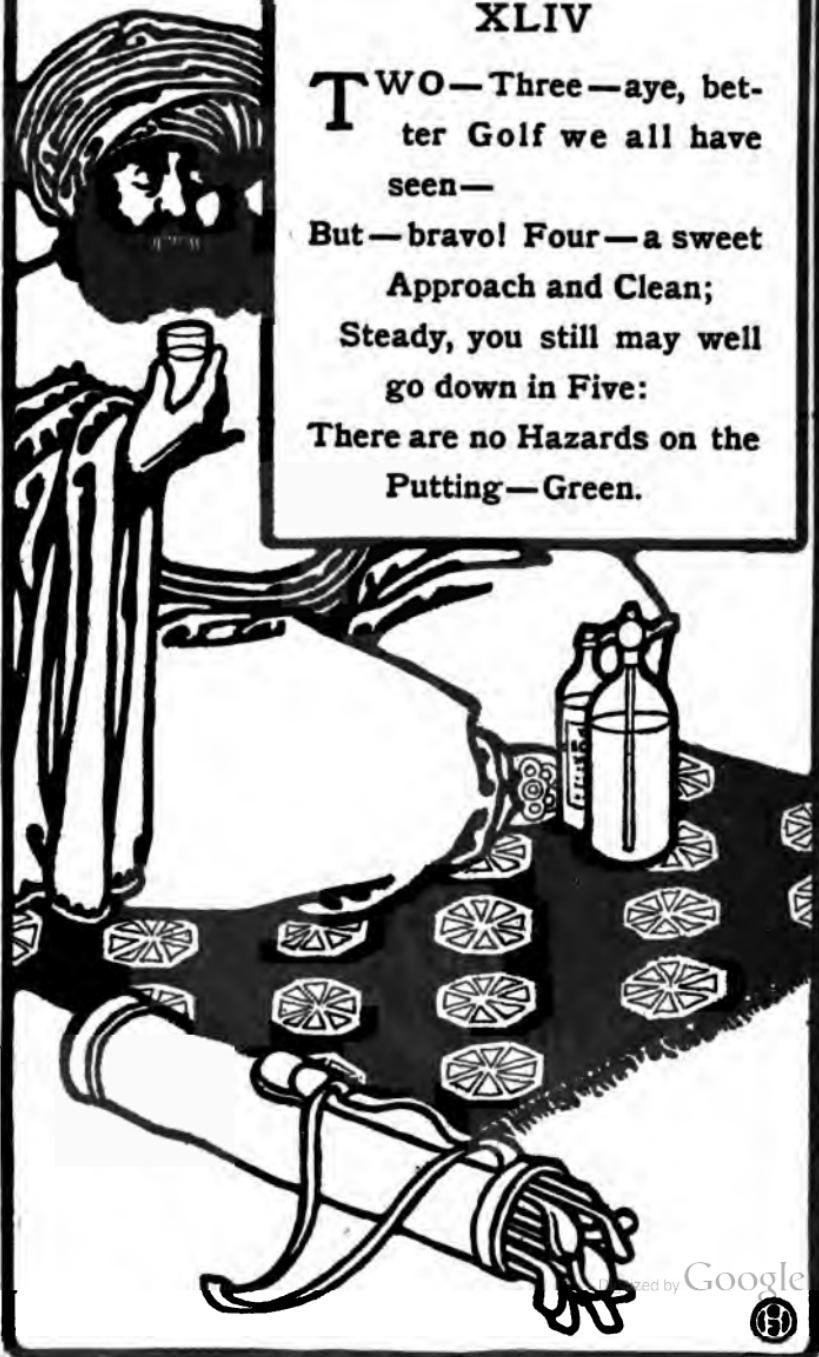
XLIII

BEHIND the uprisen Turf
fair in the Ditch,
To risk the Overhang, or play
back—which
To do? Ah, Brother, let the
Gallery go:
Than tear the Web, better
to drop a Stitch!



XLIV

Two—Three—aye, better Golf we all have seen—
But—bravo! Four—a sweet Approach and Clean;
Steady, you still may well go down in Five:
There are no Hazards on the Putting—Green.



XLV

WASTE not your Hour,
nor try in vain to fix
The How and Why—some
wondrous Brew to mix;
Better be jocund with a calm
Two-score
Than sadden for a bitter
Thirty-six.



XLVI

STRANGE, is it not?—
that of the myriads who
Into the Out-of-Bounds have
late play'd through,
Not one returns to tell us
of the Stroke
To guarantee the shortest
Hole in Two.



XLVII

THE Ball no question
makes of Ayes and
Noes,
But Here or There as strikes
the Player goes,
And ye who play behold
the Ball fly clean,
Or roll a Rod; but why? Who
knows? Who knows?





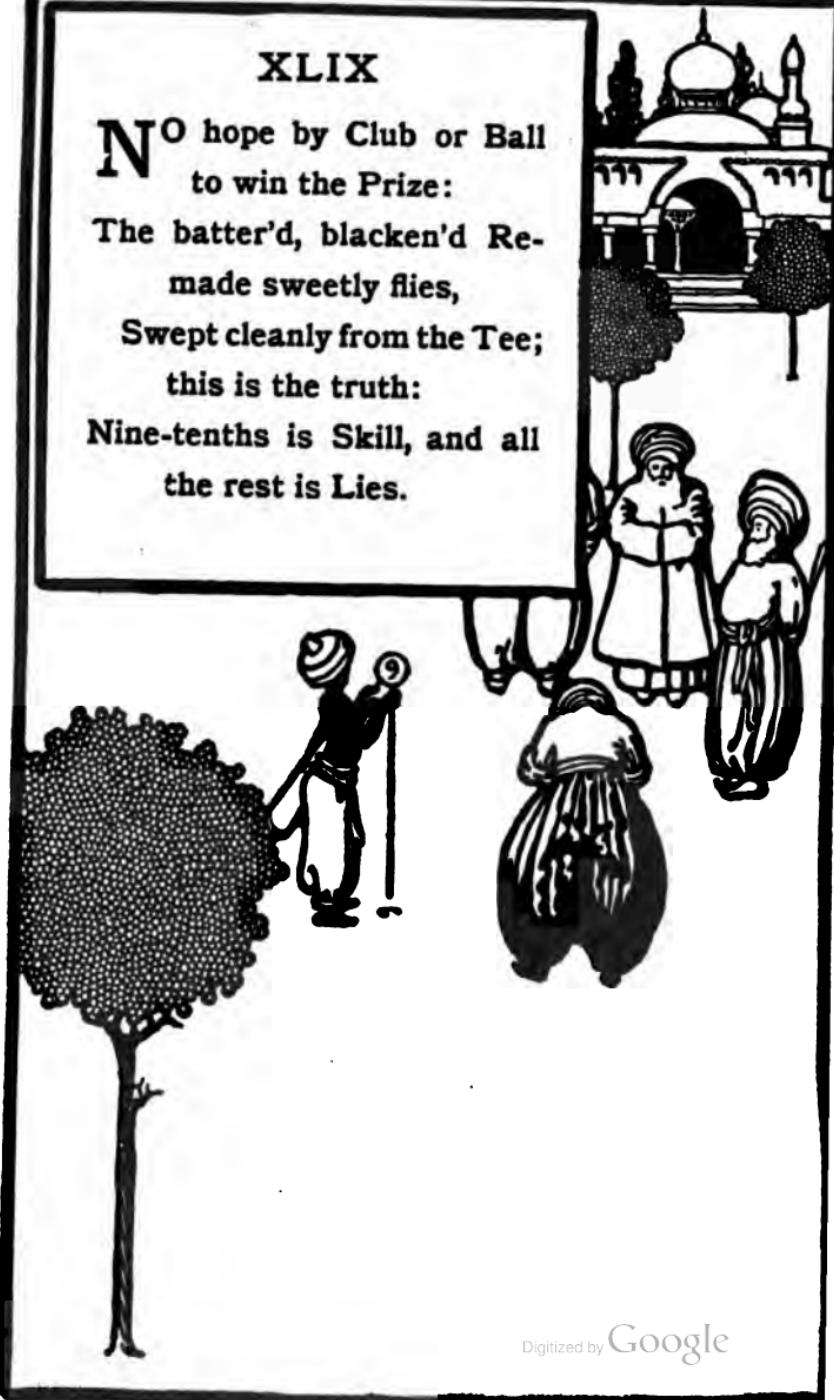
XLVIII

THE swinging Brassie
strikes; and, having
struck,
Moves on: nor all your Wit
or future Luck
Shall lure it back to cancel
half a Stroke,
Nor from the Card a single
Seven pluck.



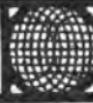
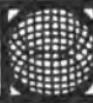
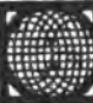
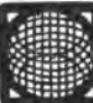
XLIX

No hope by Club or Ball
to win the Prize:
The batter'd, blacken'd Re-
made sweetly flies,
Swept cleanly from the Tee;
this is the truth:
Nine-tenths is Skill, and all
the rest is Lies.



L

AND that inverted Ball
they call the High—
By which the Duffer thinks
to live or die,
Lift not your hands to IT
for help, for it
As impotently froths as you
or I.



LI

Of Earth's first Clay was
the last Golfer framed,
And that last Golfer's latest
Score was named
When the first Morning of
Creation sang
The Dirge of every Duffer
Golf has claimed.



LII

YESTERDAY this Day's
Foozling did prepare;
TO-MORROW'S Slicing will
not yield to Prayer:

Play! for you know not
whence you came, nor
why:

Play! for you know not why
you go, nor where.



LIII

I TELL you this—When,
after youth was past,
A kindly Heav'n gave me to
Golf at last;
No Freedom but I gladly
barter'd for
The satisfying Bond that
holds me fast.



LIV

AND this I know: there is
a Charm about
The quiet State of Golf tho'
fools may flout,
That with its magic has
unlock'd the Door
Of Happiness they only howl
without.



LV

A S under cover of depart-
ing Day
Slinks the defeated Duffer on
his way,
Once more within the Mak-
er's house alone
I stood, surrounded by the
Tools of Play.



LVI

CLUBS of all Sorts and Sizes, great and small,
That stood along the floor and by the wall;
And some old batter'd Veterans were; and some
Had swung perhaps, but never driv'n at all.



S AID one among them—
“ Surely not for naught
Tom Morris fashion'd me
with anxious thought,
Has not my Form won
many a Match and Cup?
And yet—and yet—I am no
longer bought.”

(H)





LVIII

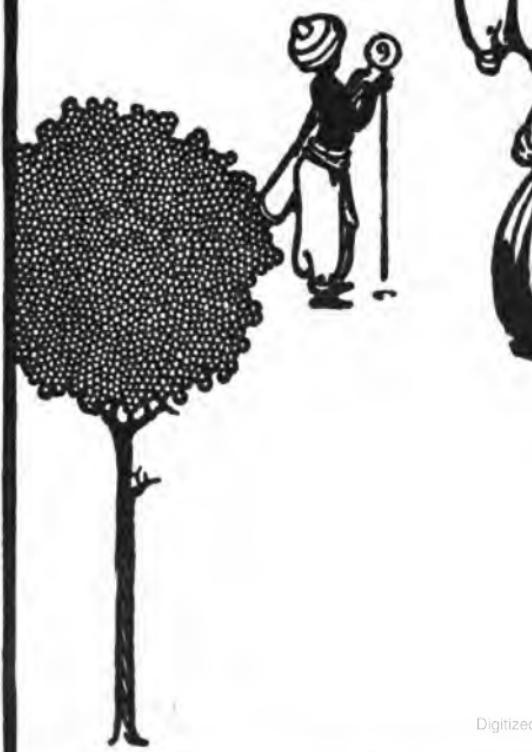
THEN said a Second—
“Hear the Codger
croak!

Sure he would make of Golf
an ancient Joke;
But Me—just think! a
modern Willie Park,
My fickle Owner cannot sell
nor soak!”



LIX

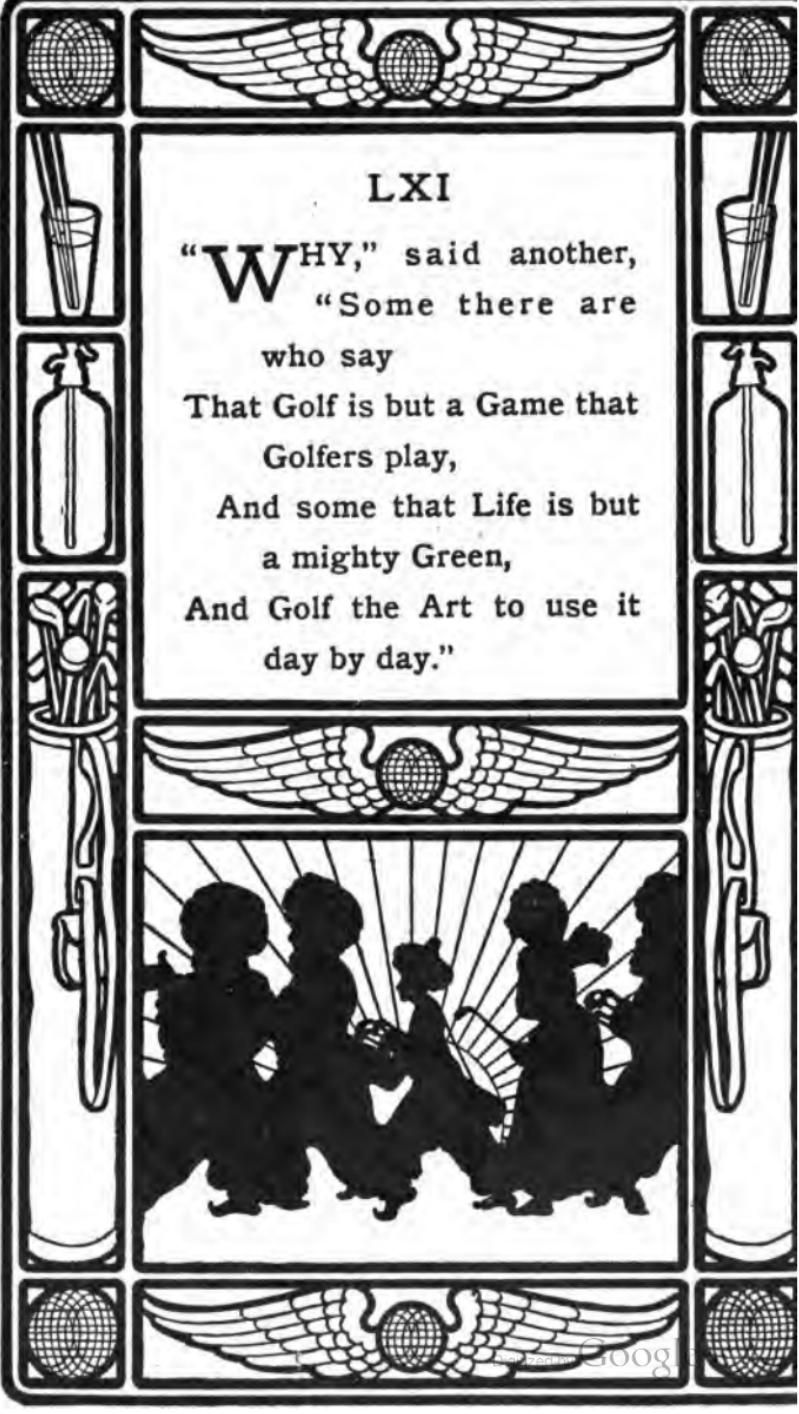
AFTER a momentary silence spake
A Brassie of a more ungainly make—
“They sneer at me for leaning all awry:
Well, then, I ask who won the last Sweepstake?”



LX

WHEREAT some one
of the loquacious Lot,
I think a putting Niblick,
or if not,
A driving Putter, or a
goose-neck'd Cleek—
“Pray, what is Golf then,—
and the Golfer what?”





LXI

"WHY," said another,
"Some there are
who say
That Golf is but a Game that
Golfers play,
And some that Life is but
a mighty Green,
And Golf the Art to use it
day by day."



LXII

"WELL," murmur'd
one, "let whoso
make or buy,
All in one Pickle we—like
as we lie:
For let the right Good-
Fellow come along,
We all may lay the Ball dead
by and by."

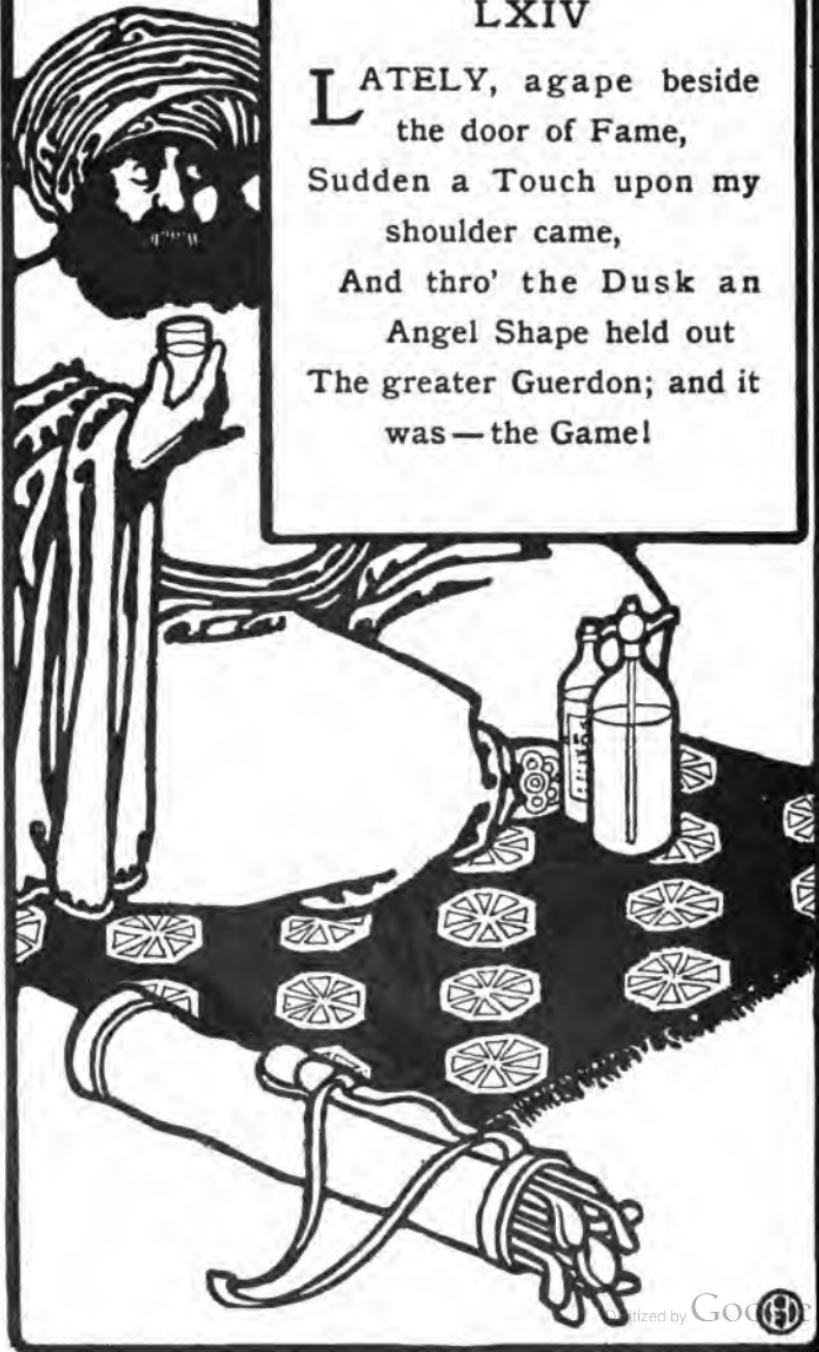
LXIII

SO one and one and one
I heard them speak:
"Ah, Friends," said I, "t is
not a Make we seek,
A Duffer arm'd with all the
Clubs there be—
What is he to a Player with
a Cleek?"



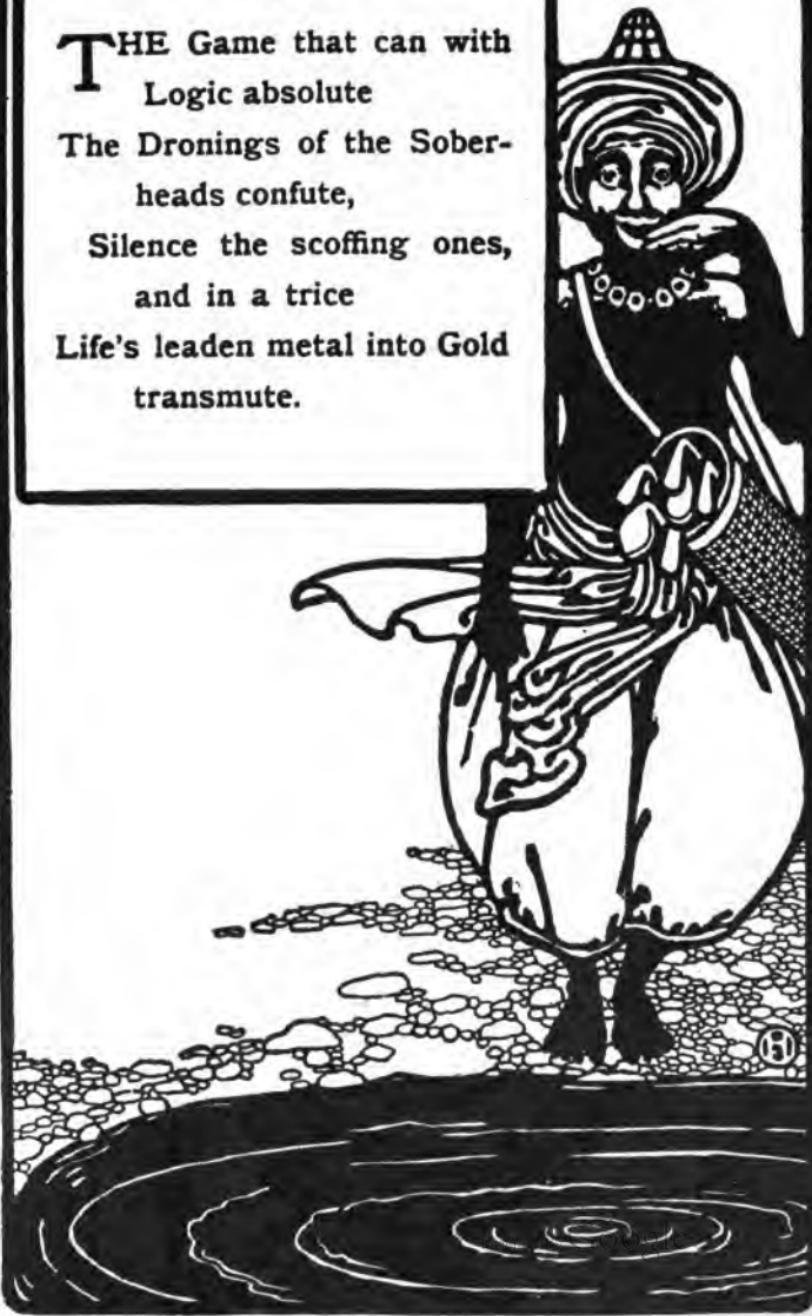
LXIV

LATELY, agape beside
the door of Fame,
Sudden a Touch upon my
shoulder came,
And thro' the Dusk an
Angel Shape held out
The greater Guerdon; and it
was—the Game!



LXV

THE Game that can with
Logic absolute
The Dronings of the Sober-
heads confute,
Silence the scoffing ones,
and in a trice
Life's leaden metal into Gold
transmute.



LXVI

INDEED, the brave Game
I have loved so well
Has little taught me how to
buy or sell;
Has pawn'd my Greatness
for an Hour of Ease,
And barter'd cold Cash for—
a Miracle.



LXVII

I NDEED, indeed, Repentance oft before
I swore—but it was Winter
when I swore,
And then and then came
Spring, and Club-in-hand
I hasten'd forth for one Round
—one Round more.





LXVIII

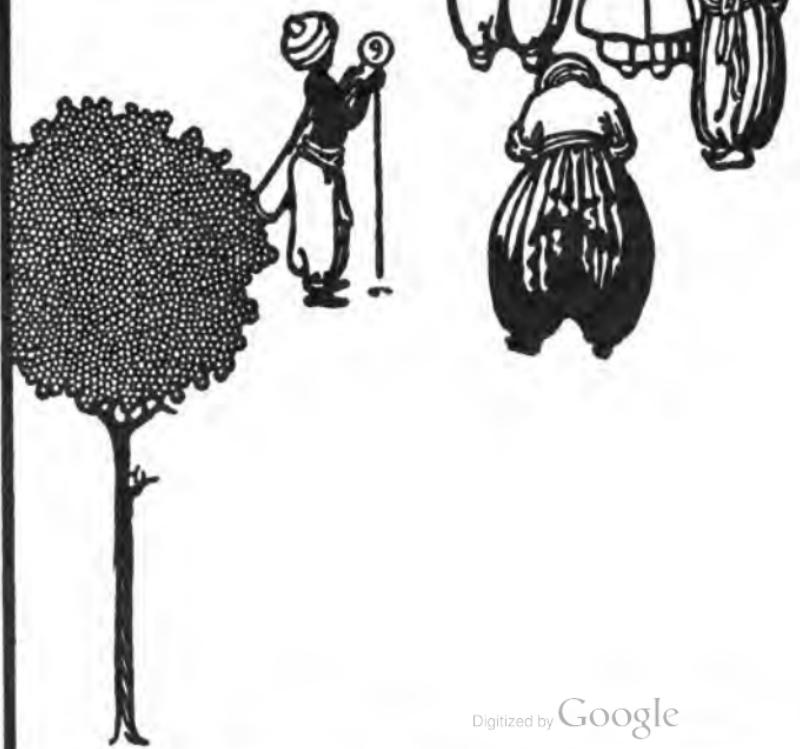
BUT much as Golf has
play'd the Infidel,
And robb'd me of my worldly
Profit — Well,
I often wonder what the
Grubbers earn
One half so precious as the
Joy they sell.



LXIX

WHAT! for a senseless
Bank-Account to
wreak

Their manly Strength on
Ledgers, till too weak
To swing a club?—So
Caddies calmly tread
In Mire the Ball Heav'n sent
them here to seek.



LXX

WHAT! as a poor dull
Drudge to waste the
Force
That might have made a
Golfer, till the Source
Of Golf be dried—and Life
grow all too brief
To top a Ball around the
Ladies' Course!





LXXI

YET, ah, that Golf should
vanish with the green!
What noble matches Winter
might have seen;
And in Old Age what glo-
rious Hazards foil'd,
What Zest of painful Pleas-
ures might have been!



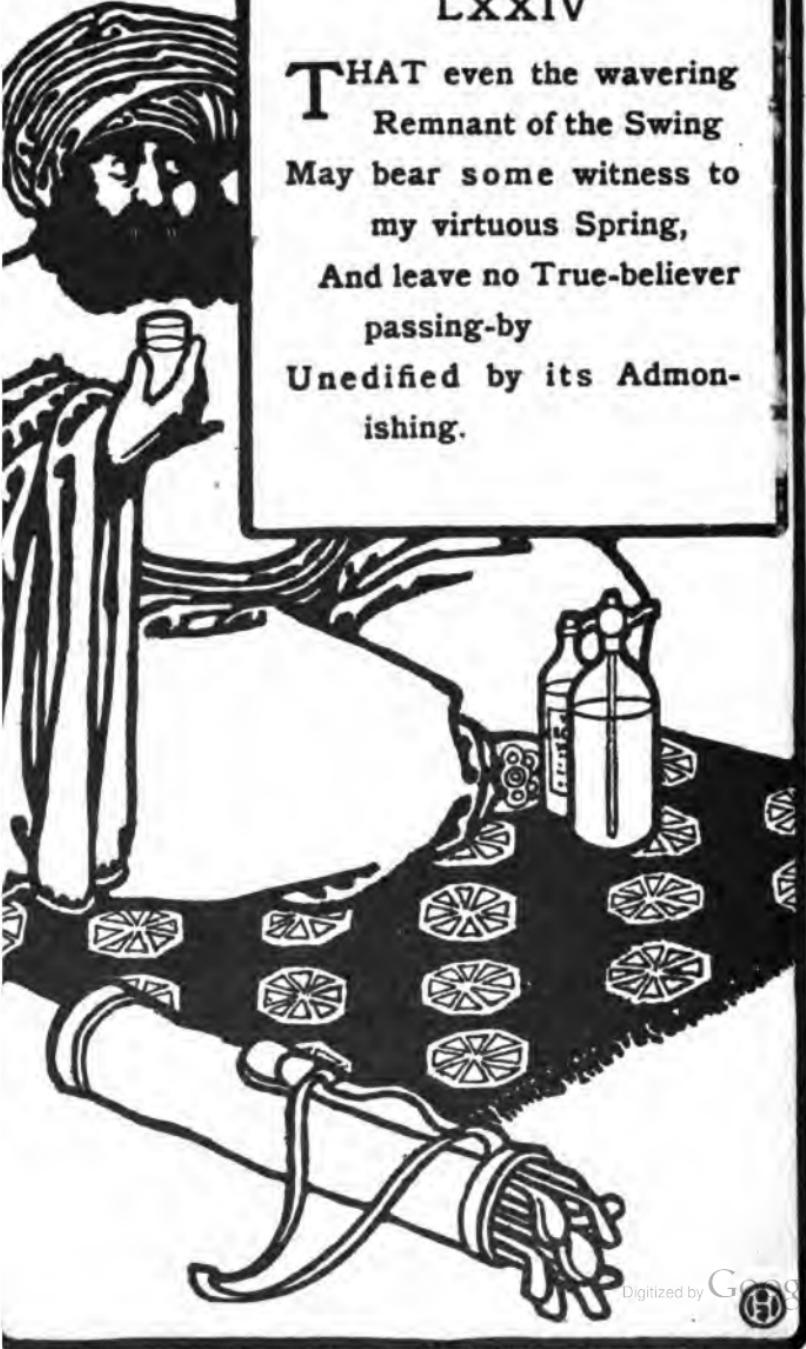
LXXII

WOULD but the dim Face
of old Winter yield
One glimpse of green, like
Youth to Age reveal'd,
Thro' which once more the
failing Limbs might
spring
As springs the trampled
Herbage of the Field.

LXXIII

AHi with the Green my
fading life provide,
Some ancient golfing Crony
by my side:
Content to play one Round,
or, meeker still,
To mix a gentle Foursome
satisfied.





LXXIV

THAT even the wavering
Remnant of the Swing
May bear some witness to
my virtuous Spring,
And leave no True-believer
passing-by
Unedified by its Admon-
ishing.

LXXV

WOULD but the god of
Golfers ere too late
Arrest the sure-advancing
step of Fate,
What matter if we play the
Odd or Like?
Or—if we play—hole out in
Four or Eight?



LXXVI

A H, let the Honor go to
Fate, and let
All difficulties by that Crack
be met;
The Duffer still may win a
Half or two,
Content while Fate is only
Dormie yet.



LXXVII

Or if ev'n this be taken,
you and I
May still fare onward calmly,
honestly,
Nor care how many Down
the Record stand:
The Match is over—Let us
play the Bye!

(H)





LXXVIII

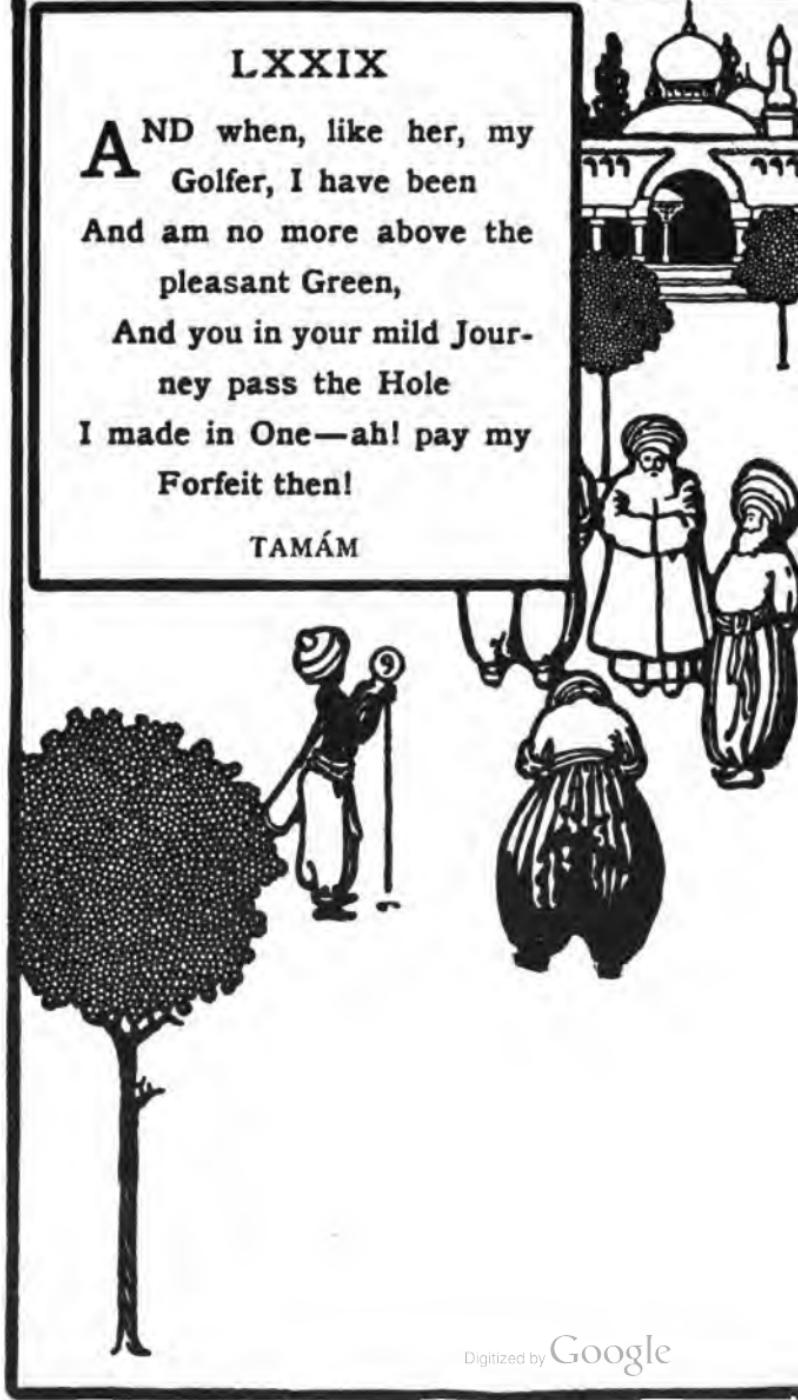
YON rising Moon that
leads us Home again,
How oft hereafter will she
wax and wane;
How oft hereafter rising
wait for us
At this same Turning—and
for One in vain.



LXXIX

AND when, like her, my
Golfer, I have been
And am no more above the
pleasant Green,
And you in your mild Jour-
ney pass the Hole
I made in One—ah! pay my
Forfeit then!

TAMÁM



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